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Every Little Thing He Does: Entrepreneurship and Appropriation in the *Magic Mike* Series

Broderick Chow

ABSTRACT This essay analyses the theatricalized performance of stripping in the popular films *Magic Mike* (2013; dir. Steven Soderbergh) and its sequel, *Magic Mike XXL* (2015; dir. Gregory Jacobs). Following a critical dance studies approach that attends to the intersection of body and gesture with socio-political, historical, and economic structures, I suggest theatricalized sexual labour in these films reveals the racial exclusions from the ideology of entrepreneurship. Considering the appropriation of black aesthetics in *Magic Mike XXL*'s performances of striptease, the film seeks to evaporate the spectre of race, that is, the way the white fantasy of the entrepreneurial subject is supported by the appropriation of racialized and especially black labour.

The *Magic Mike* movies are all about *work*. In the first film, *Magic Mike* (2012), director Steven Soderbergh's concern is the post-industrial service economy, and the way it obliges protagonist Mike Lane (Channing Tatum) to take on many insecure jobs. It is on a roofing contract that Mike meets young Adam (Alex Pettyfer), who he quickly recruits to another job, stripping for women at a club called XQuisite. By aligning striptease with other precarious jobs Soderbergh overlaps the fantasy of unattainable masculinity with the fantasy of vocational labor, which made the film fodder for internet think-pieces—the combination of peccs, pop-and-lock and pop-Marxism was irresistible.¹

At the same time, the *Magic Mike* movies are all about *sex*, as shown by the sequel, *Magic Mike XXL* (2015, directed by Gregory Jacobs). The same milieu of precarious work is subjected to a much more fetishistic gaze. From the cold open of Mike on a delivery, flexing his arms in the uniform of proletarian sexiness, the grey t-shirt,² to a new classic piece of screendance in which Mike grinds and body rolls all over his workshop, Jacob's direction shows a more ambiguous relation between striptease and other forms of labor. Manual labor is part of Mike's self-employed business and becomes the site of fantasy. Where *Magic Mike*'s dusty realist aesthetic critiques late-capitalism, *Magic Mike XXL* uses male striptease as a way of celebrating an ideology of *entrepreneurship*, which has been embraced in recent years by neoliberal ideologues (and sometimes counter-hegemonic voices), as a "a means of insertion into increasingly competitive labour markets," and a panacea to neoliberalism's collateral damages.³ In the *Magic Mike* series, entrepreneurship becomes a "body project." Mike's body is both tool and product of labor. Autonomy, creativity, and freedom are manifested in everything from his chiselled muscles and carefully groomed hairlessness to his outstanding choreography.

Between work and sex, labor and desire, the *Magic Mike* films are a comment on a specifically *white male* experience of post-industrial precarity. But on a third level, the *Magic Mike* movies are all about *performance*, something rarely analysed in relation to them. This, perhaps, explains the mixed critical response to the sequel. While "woke bros" could watch the first film and enjoy Channing Tatum's body and dancing as Marxist

critique, the exponentially higher frequency of stripping and performance in *Magic Mike XXL* made it all too clear that audiences were consuming Tatum's sexual labor. Although male audiences seemed to stay away from the sequel (women made up 96% of audiences, apparently), I would argue this is not only a result of a kind of homophobia or homophobia, but also a type of *anti-theatricality*.⁴ For the thrusting bodies of the second film, are, above all, theatrical, gimmicky bodies, whose obvious labor of self-construction queers the economic nature of the narrative.⁵ This means that we cannot understand either film as simple social commentary on precarity, and therefore any analysis based on narrative alone is incomplete. After all, it is Tatum's dancing, his ability with a theatrical form, that has been a significant part of the movies' draw. After seeing *Magic Mike XXL*, I spoke to my friend Peter, a personal trainer and bodybuilder from New Zealand, who used to be a stripper in a similar sort of club in Auckland. "It's very accurate in terms of the atmosphere and backstage and everything, but no one ever danced like Channing Tatum at my place, or anywhere else really," he told me. As a performance studies scholar with an ongoing interest in dance, it strikes me that the choreographies of *Magic Mike* and its sequel could be a way into another nagging problem with the series: its racial politics, and the exclusion of race from its discussion of precarity.

In this article, I consider the genealogy and meaning of Tatum's embodied gestures on camera to investigate the *racialized exclusions* of entrepreneurial ideology. My discussion will pivot on the concept of "magic," which functions, in the film, as an ideological device to conceal the labor of Tatum's performance by marking the character of Mike as exceptionally talented. As Tatum's dancing is based firmly in the idiom of hip hop and street dance, magic draws a veil over an appropriation of black labor.⁶



Figure 1. The solo number "Pony," from *Magic Mike*, choreographed by Alison Faulk. Set to a well-known R&B tune by Ginuwine, the number draws heavily on a pop-and-lock choreographic vocabulary. *Magic Mike*, Warner Bros. Pictures, 2012, author's screenshot.

Seen from the perspective of its embodied gestural and vocal aesthetics, *Magic Mike XXL* is a complex interesting exploration of racial politics on the level of performance rather than narrative. *XXL* is a simple road-trip bro comedy, structured as a quest. It is almost entirely free from peril or conflict: the group's aim is to perform, one final time, at a male strippers' convention. While the quest moves through historic sites of slavery in America's South, the upbeat story presents a fantasy of inclusive politics where racial antagonism doesn't exist. At the same time, in the appropriation of black aesthetics in *XXL*'s striptease choreography, race returns on an unconscious but embodied level. Though the script avoids mentioning race, the physical performances gesture towards the exclusions of black, brown, and queer bodies from discussions of precarity. I will firstly explore how the (white) fantasy of the entrepreneurial subject is aligned to what Elizabeth Bernstein calls the "postindustrial paradigm of sexual commerce," before demonstrating how the film demonstrates the racialized exclusions from this mode of subjectivity in the appropriation

of black aesthetics in body and voice.⁷ I argue that this method, influenced by a critical dance studies approach that attends to a labor of training and performance is crucial to engage with the film's *unconscious* (or embodied) intersectional reading of the politics of precarity.⁸

“Entrepreneur-stripper? Or Stripper-entrepreneur?”: Stripping, Precarity, and the Performance of Self

“Magic” Mike Lane is a self-starter, who dreams of owning a small business producing custom furniture by reclaiming and recycling used industrial refuse. When we meet him in film one, Mike is holding down multiple jobs: roofing, selling automotive accessories, events management, and stripping for women at Xquisite, a club in Tampa run by Dallas (Matthew McConaughey), who has his own entrepreneurial dreams of an “empire” of clubs. The narrative charts Mike’s disillusionment with getting naked for money. Initially, as Stewart and Pine argue, Mike’s stripping is imagined as “the authentic expression of active entrepreneurial self-production whose ultimate achievement is the (elusive) achievement of equity, or self-possession.”⁹ But the stripping lifestyle becomes an impediment to his relationship with Brooke, the female protagonist. The social realist exploration of precarity thus competes for attention with a romantic teleology that demands, Slavoj Žižek’s words, the “formation of the couple.”¹⁰ Alongside Mike’s disillusionment we see Adam’s induction into a world of vice, culminating in a convoluted drug smuggling plot that destroys Mike’s savings, and with them, his entrepreneurial dreams. Not that savings alone would secure that dream: Mike fails to secure a bank loan to start his furniture business—embodying entrepreneurial ideology alone is not enough to allow him access to credit.



Figure 2. Brooke (Cody Horn) and Mike (Channing Tatum). Note the jaundiced color palette employed by Soderbergh in all scenes external to Xquisite. *Magic Mike*, author’s screenshot.

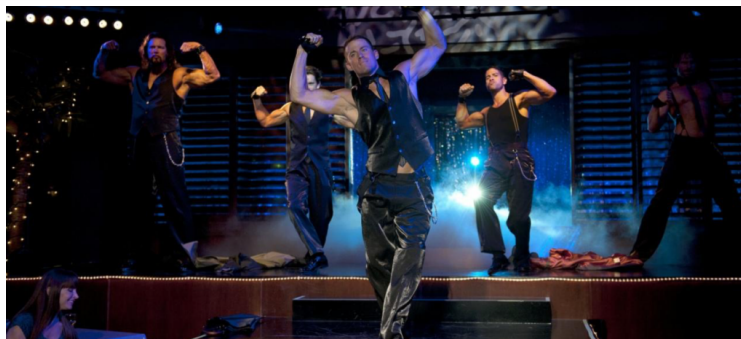


Figure 3. In contrast, the onstage scenes are saturated with color. *Magic Mike*, author’s screenshot.

Soderbergh's cinematography visualizes his critique of the post-industrial economy. Exterior shots of Tampa, Mike's house, the construction site, the bank, backstage at XQuisite and other "real" locations are lensed in a washed-out, jaundiced, and dusty color. This is juxtaposed by the brilliantly saturated colors of the onstage fantasy world in which the strip show takes place. Stripping is thus presented as a seductive but ultimately unfulfilling diversion. While stripping represents Mike's flexibility and versatility as a member of a post-industrial economy, the film suggests it is not part of his "self." "I'm not my lifestyle," he shouts to Brooke, "am I Magic Mike right now talking to you? I'm not my goddamn job!" Stripping becomes a loss of self: "Rather than coming to embody the self-made man [. . .] his self vanishes, and he is transfigured as an iconic non-self. The nude, unlike the naked, the embodied subjectivity that resists objectification, is an object his clients can control and consume."¹¹ Despite the initial frisson of self-fulfilment, *Magic Mike* presents male stripping in a way that chimes in with first-person dance and performance scholarship on women's stripping, such as Jessica Berson's account of the way corporate management in branded clubs exercises creative control over dancers' very movements; or Louise Owen's argument that fitness based pole-dancing, presented as empowering, normalizes hyper-femininity in relation to precarity and patriarchy.¹² Read strictly on the level of story and shots, *Magic Mike* presents a fairly sobering, realist exploration of the alienation of male bodies under neoliberalism, where "stripping [can] be understood as a sexualized extension of emotional work."¹³

Sociological and ethnographic research around striptease and sex work echoes these cinematic concerns. According to Elizabeth Bernstein, "a rise in service occupations and temporary work, an increase in labour migrations from developing to developed countries, and the emergence of new paradigms of family and community have fuelled the growth and diversification of sexual labour."¹⁴ In this "post-industrial culture," men stripping for women becomes part of a larger portfolio of entrepreneurial work and holds the promise of controlling both women and money, reifying the compulsory heterosexual matrix while reversing positions of objectification and consumption.¹⁵ Maren Scull notes that for her informants, "stripping led to increased feelings of mattering and mastery, and enhanced [their] self-esteem."¹⁶ Nicola Smith goes further in her ethnographic research with male sex workers in San Francisco's Tenderloin. She writes: "many of the men I spoke to appealed to discourses surrounding the sale of sex as a form of sexual exploration, self-expression and even spiritual discovery."¹⁷ Smith suggests that a significant number of male sex workers presented their labor as "a form of embodied critique of, resistance to, and even outright rebellion against, the perceived cultural norms of American society-at-large," often appealing to the idea of a "free market."¹⁸ Accepting the neoliberal dictum that there is no alternative to the market, sex work is presented as an opportunity for greater self-actualization and entrepreneurship, which is precisely the attitude communicated by the characters in *Magic Mike XXL*. Interestingly, the figure of the sex-work entrepreneur correlates with what Jen Harvie calls the "Artrepreneur," which represents the way "political, economic and social mandates to foster creative economies are increasingly casting art practice as economic practice."¹⁹ *XXL* plays on these twinned figures of precarity by emphasizing that the performance of stripping is *art*. Its vision of performance as needing to be truthful and from the self resonates with 20th century discourses of the actor's process, principally those deriving from Konstantin Stanislavsky. In a scene on the tour bus the guys discuss the set list, enthusiastic about their old hits. Mike suggests instead they come up with new routines that are truer to their inner selves, using their own desires and histories to color the performance, just as Stanislavsky's actors might draw on their emotional memory.

Mike: (*to Richie*) Have you ever wanted to be a fireman?

Richie: Nah, I got the phobia thing.

Mike: That's right, fire phobia. Do you like that song? Do you play it when you're not on stage?

The "sexy version" of a uniformed job (fireman, doctor, construction worker), as Katherine Liepe-Levinson notes, has long been a part of male strip shows such as the Chippendales. *XXL*'s entrepreneurial vision discards the costume of the "hired" worker in favour of the (literally) bare self.²⁰ Encouraged by his buddies, Richie enters a roadside service station with the aim of making the cashier "smile." Mike eggs him on: "You're not a fireman! What are you?" Richie roars back: "I'm a male entertainer!" To the diegetic background music playing in the station, Richie proceeds to strip to the waist and dance for the cashier, pouring water from a plastic bottle on sale over himself. Eventually, she cracks a smile. Richie's performative stripping in everyday life in *XXL* folds the "alienated sexuality" of the strippers into a "true," yet entrepreneurial self.²¹ Thus, the film suggests that sexual commerce requires full identification with the role, rather than carefully managed presentation (what Bernstein calls "bounded authenticity"). In the contemporary ideology of self-made entrepreneurship work becomes an opportunity for greater self-actualization, despite job security being at a historic low in the current precarious moment.²²

Isaac Butler argues that this narrative of performance and self-fulfilment resonates with Stephen Soderbergh's own questions about art-making and cinema (while Soderbergh is not the director, he was executive producer, and shot and edited the film under different pseudonyms).²³ In the first film, according to Butler, stripping (and by extension, filmmaking) is tempting but alienating. The second film, on the other hand, "holds out the promise that making a work of art that is authentic and made with a personal (both individual and collective) vision can be more deeply pleasurable and fulfilling for the audience."²⁴ Hence, stripping is taken seriously in the film as an art form. Like the genre of the "backstage musical" such as *A Chorus Line* or *42nd Street*, in which the labor of auditions and rehearsals is sublimated through the pleasure and affect of the musical number, *Magic Mike XXL* spends a lot of time watching the guys devise and work on their respective acts. In other words, *Magic Mike XXL* is a film about a form of labor that is all about satisfying the audience that wonders at the same time if this labor can be something transcendent, or, in other words, unalienated. Yet, this reading of *Magic Mike XXL*'s ideology of art and fulfilment is incomplete, as it does not consider the role of race in sustaining and reproducing fantasies of non-alienated labor (i.e. art-making). To reveal the films' racial politics, I want to turn to the key concept that forms the films' backdrop, the role of *magic*.

"The Name's Magic. Magic Mike": Magic, Theatricality, and Labor

Magic Mike XXL Channing Tatum - Pony



Figure 4. (Video) The number “Pony” from Magic Mike XXL. In contrast to the first film, the reappearance of “Pony” in XXL marks the first time we see Mike dance “for himself.” Note the way in which the workshop is animated by his movement and gestures. Magic Mike XXL, Youtube.com, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZqJXFGYztE>

What exactly makes Mike “magic”? *Magic Mike XXL*'s first dance number, a version of Goethe's *Der Zauberlehrling* (*Sorcerer's Apprentice*) with more pelvic thrusting, provides a clue. The scene begins with Mike alone in his workshop late at night, welding a part for a new piece. Over the stereo, a robotic announcer tells us: “You're listening to the Golden Age of Hip Hop . . . only on Spotify,” when the intro of “Pony” (familiar to viewers of the first film) by the R&B artist Ginuwine kicks in—a skittering 4/4 beat marked by a man's processed, guttural voice intoning “Yeah, yeah. Oh yeah.” Mike raises his welding mask, and a wry smile crosses his face. He tries to return to work, sanding his “piece” on an angle grinder. The beat and the phallic positioning of the “work” takes over. Mike begins dancing. He starts seated in an explicitly theatrical front-facing framed shot. Using a pop-and-lock gestural vocabulary, he moves his body to the beat, his arms and legs becoming machinic or otherworldly. He swings around the support beam of the workshop like a stripper pole, landing on top of his work surface. He places his drill under his hips and thrusts them, “penetrating” the surface of the wood. He continues to grind and slide around the equipment in the workshop, his pelvis and hips disrupting his blueprints, his plans, his tax receipts.

Channing Tatum's skill as a dancer has always made him an anachronistic Hollywood star: a physical rather than intellectual actor, in the mold of Gene Kelly.²⁵ Like Kelly's titular number in *Singing in the Rain*, Tatum's physicality and presence *animate* his material surroundings. The drill, furniture, and pole come alive as Tatum touches them, as if the world were open and receptive to his mastery. In both sequences, a “magical” moment is staged via the intervention of a human body that through its embodied knowledge seems to animate or create a sympathetic interaction with the material world. The sequence marks Tatum's character as especially charismatic, magnetic, and outstanding. This serves an ideological function—what does it mean for a man to be magic, a quality so long associated with women and witchcraft? Magic, I want to argue, conceals a labor relation.

Magic plays a key role in the feminist political economist Silvia Federici's analysis of primitive accumulation. Analysing the transition from feudalism to capitalism in medieval Europe, Federici argues that capitalism requires not only the appropriation of labor power, but also the appropriation of *reproductive* labor. Bourgeois capitalism necessitated “the development of a new sexual division of labor subjugating women's labor and reproductive function to the reproduction of the work-force [and] the

construction of a new patriarchal order.”²⁶ Additionally, the proletarian body was “mechanized” to a new form of capitalist work-discipline, which meant that other feminized forms of body-knowledge—such as magic—had to be destroyed.²⁷ Federici is not arguing that magic as such is real. However, it is “real” as a pre-capitalist, animistic concept of the world that imagined the cosmos as a living organism with which humankind held sympathetic relations.²⁸ “The world had to be ‘disenchanted’ in order to be dominated,” she writes.²⁹ Magic threatened “the capitalist rationalization of work, since magic appeared as an illicit form of power and an instrument to *obtain what one wanted without work*, that is, a refusal of work in action,” and because it “attributed special powers to the individual: the magnetic look, the power to make oneself invisible, to leave one’s body, to chain the will of others by magical incantation.”³⁰ Magic is the power to enchant and to seduce both people and things, and for Federici the purported existence of this feminine magic qua resistance to capitalist wage-discipline fueled the gendered holocaust of the witch hunts. In the female body, magic was *witchcraft*. Particularly threatening in the Middle Ages were those “magical crimes” that threatened the capitalist subjugation of women’s reproductive labor, e.g. contraception and abortion, or even the ability to (according to the Bull of Innocent VIII, 1484) “hinder men from generating and women from conceiving; whence neither husbands with their wives nor wives with their husbands can perform their sexual acts.”³¹

Federici’s analysis demonstrates the entanglement of sex and gender with capitalist accumulation. However, while the witch hunts attempted to destroy magic qua witchcraft, I suggest it is more accurate to say that capitalism has *appropriated* the ideology of magic. Hence, in *The Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels write that that bourgeois society is like “the sorcerer who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world whom he has called up by his spells.”³² In other words, capitalism is the *re-enchantment* of the world. As Marx notes, the “commodity is not merely a thing, but abounds in “metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties.”³³ In this sense, it is akin to a fetish, an object imbued with magical powers. In Marx’s *Capital*, the following passage on an animated object complements Marx and Engels’ allusion to Goethe:

The form of wood is altered if a table is made out of it. Nevertheless the table continues to be wood, an ordinary, sensuous thing. But as soon as it emerges as a commodity, it changes into a thing which transcends sensuousness. It not only stands with its feet on the ground, but, in relation to all other commodities, it stands on its head, and evolves out of its wooden brain grotesque ideas, *far more wonderful than if it were to begin dancing of its own free will.*³⁴

In *XXL*’s “Pony” we are offered a theatrical embodiment of this idea. At 1:31 of the above video Mike executes a pirouette on his workbench, landing with his knees on a stool, which happens to be perfectly placed for him. As he thrusts with his hips, the stool moves sympathetically, and impossibly, with him, almost literally animated. Getting off the stool, it appears, for a split second, to dance by itself (see also Figure 5).



Figure 5. At this point, the drill appears to be animated by Mike's thrusting pelvis.

Magic Mike XXL, Warner Bros., 2015, author's screenshot.

The workshop setting, the props of manual labor, and the spectacular and at times *unreal* dance all contribute to Mike's magical powers, consistent with an entrepreneurial ideology in which magical characteristics such as magnetism, charisma, and even seduction are not only valued but demanded by the post-industrial, precarious economy. Channing Tatum's physical magic (which is not magic but labor and training) contribute to an ideological magic, playing into a liberal-individualistic discourse by which certain subjects are already marked for success by certain ineffable qualities. While, as Federici argues, in the Middle Ages the "existence of powers available only to particular individuals, and thus not easily generalized and exploitable" had to be eradicated, today such exceptionality is perfectly consistent with the individualist ideology of late capitalism.

However, *Magic Mike* and *Magic Mike XXL* are not conventional films about an enterprising young man. What people actually want are ripped pecs and chiselled abs—therefore, we should give greater focus to the delivery mechanism for this "bared man flesh," the films' acts of choreography and performance.³⁵ Tatum's dance performances demonstrate Mike's magic, but threaten to undo it, since, like in the act of a stage magician, the audience is aware that there is no magic as such except for training, rehearsal, and labor. As Nicholas Ridout argues in *Stage Fright*, the failure of the theatrical illusion is "not anomalous, but somehow, perhaps constitutive."³⁶ Theatre, in which people in their leisure time watch others in their working time, constructs an illusion that simultaneously draws scrutiny to the failure of this illusion. Theatre's strange failure as either commodity or directly consumed (service) labor thus draws attention to the contradictions of the illusion of commodity fetishism. Indeed, stage magic requires the potential or even partial revelation of its labored inner workings. In the same way, Mike's magic is the potential to master the world (transform it into commodities for the enrichment of the person), a completely material process, while also erasing the labor behind it. "Magic" thus is an ideological device that attempts to hide both a labor (of training and of performance) as well as the larger structures and modes of production in which this labor takes place. I suggest that, in relation to the aesthetic choices in Tatum's choreography, what the film's ideology is trying to evaporate is the spectre of *race*. By presenting Mike as "magic"—which in the films is indicated by his ability to effortlessly and naturally perform hip hop dance forms, but also to infuse a world of precarious labor with the promise that it might become "vocational"—the films divert attention away from the industrial model on which they are built, one which privileges white bodies performing black forms and styles while disavowing the labor of black performers and artists that make these forms and styles possible. This "Elvis Presley" industrial model of white appropriation of black genres is obviously nothing new, but the fundamentally theatrical way in which the *Magic Mike* films stage appropriated magic requires critical analysis.³⁷ This is especially true of *Magic Mike XXL*, which threatens to undo the whole magical enterprise by providing Mike's powers with an originary myth.

"How Does It Feel?": The Appropriation of Black Aesthetics

While the first *Magic Mike* features a majority white cast (the mixed-race Asian-American actress Olivia Munn is the only actor of color with a featured speaking role), its sequel features three African-American performers in principal roles (Jada Pinkett-Smith, Stephen "tWitch" Boss, and Donald Glover), with substantially enlarged roles for Latino cast members Adam Rodriguez and Gabriel Iglesias from the original film. Despite greater diversity, *Magic Mike XXL* is strangely silent about race. The film pointedly situates Mike

on a journey through sites of chattel slavery in Georgia and South Carolina, including two postbellum plantation mansions, but at the same time refuses to disclose what the filmmakers find attractive about this particular American geography. It therefore participates in a somewhat routine nostalgic aestheticization of the South in popular culture that sanitizes the past at the same time as it hints at the violence of slavery. However, while the narrative may remain silent on race, the performances of stripping mark certain bodies as capable of entrepreneurship through sexual magic and others as laboring on behalf of the first group.



Figure 6. The Southern Gothic interior of Domina. *Magic Mike XXL*, author's screenshot.

Magic Mike XXL's long second act is a tour-de-force of stripping set at Domina, a mansion in Savannah, Georgia that resembles a former plantation. Run by Mike's former mentor and lover Rome (played by Jada Pinkett-Smith), Domina is a private club where black men strip for black women. Mike has brought his crew here to beg the help of Rome, who they want to act as MC in place of Dallas. This rather trivial dramatic action is an excuse to show more "bared man flesh," but its unconscious purpose is to demonstrate the indebtedness of Mike's magic to his mentor Rome. The sequence is an ambiguous piece of filmmaking, which both celebrates black female desire and intimacy, and objectifies black male virtuosity. On the one hand, the sequence is unusual in mainstream cinema in that it portrays black female desire, intimacy, and enjoyment without trauma or pain. Black intimacy, Candice M. Jenkins explains, has long been a political battlefield through respectability politics, or what she calls the "salvific wish," according to which "black women (and, to a much lesser extent, black men) could pay with their bodies, or rather with the concealment and restraint of those bodies, for the ultimate 'safety' of the black community as a whole."³⁸ The regulation and suppression of black intimacy and erotic behaviour is political because "black bodies have been assumed always to be excessively proximate and desirous bodies, bodies too readily revealed or exposed, too willing to reveal and expose others," rendering them especially vulnerable.³⁹ The sequence at Domina is therefore radical in its celebration of desirous bodies without shame.

Without invalidating this celebration of black female desire, the sequence also represents a theatrical transaction in which black male bodies labor for their audience. This labor is virtuosic, but it is labor nonetheless. Firstly, Malik, played by dancer Stephen "tWitch" Boss, has an extended sequence that shows off the street dance skills for which he has become famous. Malik's strip is even more acrobatic than Mike's, his pop-and-lock gestures and body rolls intended to demonstrate his mastery of each muscle. Secondly, André, played by actor/musician Donald Glover, improvises a rap/R&B song to a woman in the audience named Caroline. André's linguistic dexterity parallels Malik's physicality; both are performances of black virtuosity located in typically black genres. The casting of tWitch and Glover is therefore important; both are actors, but both are also famous for their ability in genres of black performance labor. This provides a non-diegetic,

intertextual key to how to watch these acts. We are watching the virtuosity of bodies rather than the performance of character. After all, tWitch doesn't even speak any lines in the film. The theatrical presentation of black virtuosity here resonates with a larger discourse and history of black masculinities and embodiment because the performances are not only directed to a black female gaze, but a white male one as well. Malik's performance takes place in a semicircle of black women, who mainly stand watching his back. As the camera pulls back we see that at the opening of the semicircle Mike is watching with Rome. Malik is performing as much for Mike's gaze as the women's, and ours. Similarly, André's performance is directed to "Caroline," who never appears again in the film. The actual purpose of this performance is to create a connection between André and Ken, who are seen in the very next scene talking about how to make a start in the music business.



Figure 7. Malik's strip, performed by Stephen "tWitch" Boss. *Magic Mike XXL*, author's screenshot.



Figure 8. Malik's performance is staged for Mike's gaze as much as our own. Here we see Rome, Mike, and the rest of the crew form a diegetic audience. *Magic Mike XXL*, author screenshots.

In his book *Constructing the Black Masculine*, literary theorist Maurice O. Wallace theorizes the concept of black male *spectragraphia*, a "chronic syndrome of inscribed misrepresentation."⁴⁰ Wallace argues that the framing of the black male body as public spectacle "congeals black male bodies into statued rigidities, arresting representation at the threshold of human being."⁴¹ *Spectragraphia* confines black masculinities within existing representational regimes. It makes black male bodies, in Mark Anthony Neal's words, "legible." As Neal writes, "that the most 'legible' black male body is often thought to be a criminal body and/or a body in need of policing and containment—incarceration—is just a reminder that the black male body that so seduces America is just as often the bogeyman that keeps America awake at night."⁴² Presenting black male sex work within

immediately legible cultural forms—the street dancer, and the “Soul Man”—*Magic Mike XXL* does little to challenge the *spectragraphia* of the black male body.

The presence of Mike’s crew in this enchanted scene of black labor congeals the relation between (appropriated) labor, performance, and enjoyment that has its origins in America’s history of slavery. “Black men,” Antonia Randolph writes, “because of their race, never had the luxury of not having their bodies examined.”⁴³ At the same time as black men have been “over identified with their bodies,” Randolph suggests—in sympathy with Jenkins’ position—that they have also been “denied the pleasures of it.”⁴⁴ However, as Saidiya Hartman demonstrates, the black performance of excess enjoyment was also an instrument of white domination and power. Analysing historical accounts of the “coerced theatricality”⁴⁵ of the coffle (the enchained line of slaves marching together), the displays of the auction block, and the stage performances of melodrama and minstrelsy, Hartman argues that the accounts of slaves “singing and dancing” speak to a perception of blacks as “carefree, infantile, hedonistic, and indifferent to suffering,”⁴⁶ disavowing the violence of chattel slavery, even within accounts of slavery as a repulsive practice by white abolitionists.⁴⁷ She writes:

Moreover, blacks were envisioned fundamentally as vehicles for white enjoyment, in all of its sundry and unspeakable expressions; this was as much the consequence of the chattel status of the captive as it was of the excess enjoyment imputed to the other, for those forced to dance on the decks of slave ships crossing the Middle Passage, step it up lively on the auction block, and amuse the master and his friends were seen as the purveyors of pleasure.⁴⁸

Hartman’s theorization of the way black performance is bound up with black pain and the historical trauma of slavery provides more distressing context to how we might view the performance of sex work by black male bodies who seem, to all appearances, to be tied to a house (Domina) and a mistress (Rome). Malik’s performance (like Mike’s, for example) is excessively physical and acrobatic, at least for a striptease. The *passion* he puts into his work obscures the structures in which this work takes place, and the way this passion and labor might be coerced. The virtuosity and apparent honesty of André’s serenading of Caroline, which appears in the “soul man” tradition that is based on the intertwining of love and pain, is similarly obfuscating. Of course, black performance in the context of this film is in no way equivalent to performance in the context of chattel slavery, yet it demonstrates the same disavowal of labor.⁴⁹ The fact that this work is a form of sex work only reinforces the *specular* discourse by which black men and women are imagined as more wanton or sexual than whites.

Such perceptions do not exist for the white members of Mike’s crew, who can appropriate this labor in the way that the apprentice might finally learn the sorcerer’s magic. After the performances of Malik and André, Rome continues to refuse Mike her aid, forcing him to prove his “training” in another acrobatic strip sequence. Faulk’s choreography here is expansive, taking advantage of the large space of the mansion. As in the workshop, Tatum’s body moves through each corner, using his surrounding environment as a kind of playground. Only here, rather than tools, props, and materials, Mike’s objects are black bodies. The sequence begins as Mike leapfrogs over Malik’s back into the space. Sharing a glance with Rome and kissing her hand, he slides back into the center of the room, thrusting his pelvis into the face of a slim black woman who appears to be positioned, waiting, on all fours for him. This woman is then flipped up, over, and around as Mike simulates cunnilingus and penetrative sex, the camera rarely giving us a view of her face, but rather concentrating on Mike’s face and torso. Towards the end of the dance, Mike uses the backs of two women as tables. Effectively, the magic of the workshop has been

reversed, or perhaps extended: while in the workshop Mike's magic enchants objects here the bodies of black women become props for Mike's performance, like the tables he creates in his workshop. His magic now fully expresses the ideology of bourgeois capitalism: from the manipulation of the natural world to the objectification of others.



Figure 9. The “table top” sequence is repeated with the bodies of black women standing in for the objects in Mike’s workshop. *Magic Mike XXL*, author’s screenshot.

“White Chocolate” and Blue-Eyed Soul

In the final third of the movie, the guys arrive at Myrtle Beach for the convention and are coached by Rome, Andre, and Malik for their final show, in which the appropriation of blackness is strongly apparent. Firstly, we have Tito’s strip, which takes as its setting an ice-cream parlour, referencing his earlier post-stripping goal. Played by Puerto Rican/Cuban-American actor Adam Rodriguez, Tito takes to the stage with hair braided in fresh cornrows, to the song “Candy Shop” by rapper 50 Cent. Rodriguez, who is clearly not a trained dancer, has his first “solo” dance of the two films. While featuring the simulated sexual intercourse and masturbation of a Chippendales number, the number also includes athletic movements based in hip hop and street dance.

More interesting is the transformation of “Ken-Doll.” In a previous scene, Matt Bomer had already demonstrated his skill as a singer by serenading another woman with Bryan Adams’ 1984 ballad, “Heaven.” But this is white-boy music. In order for his strip to be a full performance of self-expression, he needs to find a new sound, with the help of Rome and André. Bomer begins the number in black vest, suspenders, and trousers. He flips up a bowler hat onto his head before thrusting his hips forward. He isolates his head up, to the side, and down, then glides to the side, with leg extended and fingers on the brim of his hat. The costuming and choreographic style references Bob Fosse but the music is the sparse snare drum and electric bass intro to R&B artist D’Angelo’s “(Untitled) How Does It Feel?,” the stand-out track of D’Angelo’s album *Voodoo* (2000). Recalling the pleading falsetto of Marvin Gaye, the song propelled D’Angelo into the canon of neo-soul, but is perhaps better known for its music video, which consisted of a single shot, zooming in and out, of D’Angelo’s muscular naked body. On the one hand, as Keith M. Harris writes, the video was (like *XXL*’s *Domina* sequence) an opportunity for the reversal of Laura Mulvey’s “male gaze,” “offer[ing] an opportunity for disruption in that in a filmic convention D’Angelo is feminized, objectified, and rendered wholly as spectacle.”⁵⁰ On the other hand, the objectification of the black male body is not liberating. Indeed, D’Angelo publicly admitted to feeling objectified by the video and took a nearly 14-year hiatus. Matt Bomer’s “blue-eyed soul” cover of “How Does It Feel?” hints at this objectification (the number is designed to showcase Bomer’s sculpted white body, after all) but also feels strangely non-sexual, as its aesthetics highlight the white performer’s facility and virtuosity with black genre. It is therefore all about entrepreneurial ideology: Ken is magic too.



Figure 10. This explicitly theatrical shot references the choreography of Bob Fosse, while the aesthetic of the singing is based in the soul tradition. *Magic Mike XXL*, author's screenshot.

Finally, Channing Tatum's street dance skills are reframed in his final number with tWitch. Set within the frame of what is meant to be a giant mirror, Mike and Malik appear as "twins," dressed in identical outfits: flat brimmed baseball caps, button-down shirts buttoned only at the top, baggy jeans, and bandannas (initially) covering their faces. The costume references the style of rappers in the 1990s, and is clearly a pastiche of gangsta rap style, appropriated here to communicate "danger" or "threat." What follows is an extended number, set to three pieces of rap/R&B, which, more than any other in the two films, demonstrates Tatum's virtuosity with street dance. With the camera's gaze following only Tatum, tWitch is positioned as the "authentic" core of the movement, with the audience intended to marvel at Tatum's ability to mime this performance of blackness.



Figure 11. Mike and Malik's costumes for the final number. *Magic Mike XXL*, author's screenshots.

What is at stake in these performances is not just the idea of appropriation, of ownership of cultural forms, but material questions of remuneration and credit for work performed. Against a backdrop of industrial change in which "everyone" is meant to be a cultural producer of sorts, *XXL's* embodied staging of the appropriation of black performance labor resonates with current and exceedingly material debates around appropriation in online social media, where black cultural production on platforms like Twitter and YouTube often drives wider culture but remains uncredited and unremunerated. (Doreen St. Felix gives the example of the phrase "on fleek," which originated on sixteen-year old Kayla Newman's Vine channel.)⁵¹ Writing on the phenomenon of "blue-eyed soul," Neal remarks: "the practice of racial covers is also implicated in the political economy of American masculinity. Someone isn't just getting *paid*—they are often remade, though with the kind of flexibility that allows them to travel from 'here' to 'there' with an ease that the black bodies they appropriate are often unable to."⁵² In *XXL*, it is the white/multi-racial crew who are free to go on their entrepreneurial quest of stripping-for-its-own-sake, while the black dancers and performers are confined to the walls of Domina. By

miming blackness, the performances in the third act of the film both obscure and reveal the fact that black virtuosity is a kind of choreography. The embodied adoption of black aesthetics by the mainly white strippers unconsciously returns to the fact of which bodies are excluded from the primarily white fantasy of entrepreneurial self-making. To fulfill the fantasy of self-made entrepreneurship, Mike and the crew must rely on the unacknowledged labor of the film's black characters: Rome, Andre, and Malik. In other words, despite the powerful performances of Smith, Glover, and tWitch, the quest narrative of *XXL* places the film's black characters in structural position of what director Spike Lee called the "Magical Negro" trope.⁵³ While the film cannot acknowledge this racial discord directly it returns, unconsciously, in the bodies and voices of the actors.

Conclusion: Whither Magic?

Despite the conflict-free fantasy of its narrative, the film does not really have a happy ending—the final shots of the film are surprisingly bittersweet. Although their performance at the stripper's convention is a triumph, there is no prize to be won, no boon to be seized at the end of their quest. We never even see them pick up the piles of dollar bills from the floor. The crew goes out to the boardwalk to watch the 4th of July fireworks. Zoe, who has been set up as potential love interest for Mike, simply runs off with her female friends, denying the audience the satisfaction of the "formation of the couple." Shot in Soderbergh's handheld realist mode, the film ends on a shot of Tatum's face, both satisfied with a job well done, and wondering where the next job will come from, and more importantly, what that job will be. Magic is no defense against the forces of capitalism once released, mainly because it doesn't actually exist. There is no magic, just labor.



Figure 12. The film's surprisingly wistful and even melancholy ending. *Magic Mike XXL*, author's screenshot.

The gendered status of this labor intersects with the unconscious questions of race the series poses. As I have argued, magic is a mercurial ideology that is ultimately familiar—it signals capability, mastery, the ability to get the job done, all facets of the white male bourgeois subject of classical liberalism. Ultimately, though, the films express an anxiety over the fate of this subject, since, in the context of neoliberal precarity, its white male characters must assume a traditionally female-gendered and racialized position of affective labor. The performance of sex work by the characters in *Magic Mike* thus threatens a form of white American masculinity that is based in individual self-determination.⁵⁴ Black aesthetics, in body and voice, therefore, become a means of safely occupying and therefore disavowing this feminine position. Marx, in 1844, was troubled by the principle shared between wage labor and prostitution: "You must make everything that is yours saleable, i.e. useful."⁵⁵ In the *Magic Mike* films making yourself saleable is part of the fantasy, a way of surviving and having fun in the post-industrial economy. But considering the political unconscious of *Magic Mike XXL* reveals that this fantasy is not equally available to all bodies. While Mike Lane can both self-objectify and maintain his

sense of individuality, participation in this ideology of entrepreneurship is off limits to those subjects whose racialization has historically marked them as already-objectified.

Postscript

At the time of writing, Channing Tatum has announced that he will be directing *Magic Mike Live Las Vegas*, a “classy” male stripper show, at the Hard Rock Hotel in Las Vegas from March 2017.⁵⁶ One assumes Soderbergh’s reflections on male vulnerability in post-crisis America will not feature. According to the press release, the production may even hop onto the immersive theatre trend: “The experience starts as you enter Club Domina, a real-life version of the club at the foundation of Magic Mike XXL, where men cater to women’s desires.”⁵⁷ No mention of race is made in relation to Domina’s performers or clientele. The release concludes:

Expressly created to capture the *magnetism* of a film franchise that has grossed nearly \$300 million, this new venue and its immersive production will be one of the most unique entertainment experiences in Las Vegas. [. . .] Like Mike, *these guys are about much more than a strip*. Of course there will be dancing, but MAGIC MIKE LIVE LAS VEGAS is about giving women an immersive, first-class entertainment experience.⁵⁸













On the one hand, the reference to the fact that “these guys are about much more than a strip” seems to be a disavowal of the sexual nature of male striptease for a female audience that is a recurring trope in advertisements for such acts as the Chippendales.⁵⁹ On the other hand, it plays curiously into the discourse of magic I have unpacked in this article. Indeed, perhaps the theatre is the ideal place to stage a critique of magic. While the illusion of a Channing Tatum-look-alike grinding athletically to “Pony” will no doubt be strong, that “Mike’s” magic is comprised of, among other things, shabby sets, sequined g-strings, thick makeup, sweat, labored breathing, and work will perhaps be concurrently exposed.

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Notes

1. See, for instance, Elizabeth Greenwood, “Dancing Days,” *The New Inquiry*, July 9, 2012, <http://thenewinquiry.com/essays/dancing-days/>; Matthew McCracken, “Conceivably Leftist Cinema, *Magic Mike*” (Parts 1 and 2), *Cinepunx*, n.d., accessed August 5, 2016, <http://www.cinepunx.com/Writing/conceivably-leftist-cinema-magic-mike-part-1-of-2/>; Manohlo Dargis, “The Body Politic,” *New York Times*, June 28, 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/29/movies/magic-mike-by-steven-soderbergh-with-channing-tatum.html>, and a piece by blogger “The Fine Art Diner,”

- "*Magic Mike* and the Three Faces of Capitalism," June 30, 2012, <http://thefineartdiner.blogspot.co.uk/2012/06/magic-mike-three-faces-of-capitalism.html>. A representative example is an article by Joshua Clover, entitled "Dance Dance Revolution: *Magic Mike*, *Step Up Revolution*, and the Occupy movement," where he writes: "*Magic Mike* is a film, at its core, about a sex worker during the prolonged financial crisis, starring an actor who has also been that manner of sex worker in real life. {Mike is} a representative of immaterial and affective labour { . . . } ironically both victim and cause, locked in a sort of dance of death with the declining profitability of capital." Joshua Clover, "Dance Dance Revolution: *Magic Mike*, *Step Up Revolution*, and the Occupy Movement," *Moving Image Source*, February 4, 2013, <http://www.movingimagesource.us/articles/dance-dance-revolution-20130204>. 
2. See Roxane Gay's scene-by-scene commentary: "I Wanted to Hug Every Part of Him With My Mouth: A *Magic Mike* XXL Recap," *The Toast*, July 1, 2015, <http://the-toast.net/2015/07/01/magic-mike-xxl-recap/> 
 3. Alessandra de Sá Mello da Costa and Luiz Alex Silva Saraiva, "Hegemonic Discourses on Entrepreneurship as an Ideological Mechanism for the Reproduction of Capitalism," *Organization* 19, no. 5 (2012): 587. 
 4. Nigel M. Smith, "Magic Mike is an XXL Hit with Women but Why Did it Turn Men Off?" *The Guardian*, July 6, 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/film/2015/jul/06/magic-mike-xxl-attracts-women-scares-men-box-office>. 
 5. A fuller discussion of the theatrical and gimmicky body can be found in Broderick Chow, "Muscle Memory: Re-enacting the *Fin-de-Siècle* Strongman in Pro Wrestling," in *Performance and Professional Wrestling*, ed. Broderick Chow, Eero Laine, and Claire Warden (London: Routledge, 2016), 143–153. 
 6. Choreographer Alison Faulk has been a dancer for numerous hip hop and R&B artists and is a member of an all-female hip hop crew. See "Alison Faulk," *Danceplug*, n.d., accessed August 5, 2016, <https://www.danceplug.com/alison-faulk>. While Channing Tatum reportedly has no formal dance training, he rose to fame as the star of the street dance series *Step Up*. 
 7. Elizabeth Bernstein, *Temporarily Yours: Intimacy, Authenticity, and the Commerce of Sex* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2007). 
 8. "Critical Dance Studies" denotes a large and diverse field of scholarship. In using the term here I am drawing on Melissa Blanco Borelli's conceptualisation, in her *Oxford Handbook of Dance and the Popular Screen* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), of critical dance studies as *method*, that understands the wider significance of screendance through specific mediated bodies and choreographies. In this essay I am particularly interested in two of the questions Borelli poses: "How are multiple choreographies of identity (e.g., race, class, gender, sexuality, and nation) set in motion through the narrative, dancing bodies and/or dance style?" and "What type of corporeal labours . . . are represented or ignored?" (1). 
 9. Michelle Stewart and Jason Pine, "Vocational Embodiments of the Precariat in *The Girlfriend Experience* and *Magic Mike*," *Topia* 30–31 (2013), 186. 
 10. Slavoj Žižek, *Enjoy Your Symptom! Jacques Lacan in Hollywood and Out* (London: Routledge, 1992). 
 11. Stewart and Pine, "Vocational Embodiments," 199. 
 12. Jessica Berson, *The Naked Result: How Exotic Dance Became Big Business* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2015); Louise Owen, "Work That Body: Precarity and Femininity in the New Economy," *TDR: The Drama Review*, 56, no. 4 (2012), 78–94. 

13. David M. Boden, "Alienation of Sexuality in Male Erotic Dancing," *Journal of Homosexuality* 53, nos. 1–2 (2007): 131. [↗](#)
14. Bernstein, *Temporarily Yours*, 4. [↗](#)
15. This view is expressed by Mike's protégé, "The Kid", as he begins to go off the rails. [↗](#)
16. Maren T. Scull, "The Self-Concept as Side Bet: How Stripping Enhances the Self-Views of Men Who Dance for Women," *Deviant Behaviour* 36 (2014): 895. [↗](#)
17. Nicola J. Smith, "Body Issues: The Political Economy of Male Sex Work," *Sexualities* 15, nos. 5/6 (2012): 594. [↗](#)
18. *Ibid.*, 596 and 597. [↗](#)
19. Jen Harvie, *Fair Play: Art, Performance and Neoliberalism* (London: Palgrave), 62. [↗](#)
20. Katherine Liepe-Levinson, *Strip Show: Performances of Gender and Desire* (London: Routledge, 2001). [↗](#)
21. Boden, "Alienation." [↗](#)
22. Miya Tokumitsu, "In the Name of Love," *Jacobin*, January 2014, <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2014/01/in-the-name-of-love/>. The different role cash money plays in the sequel is indicative of this disavowal of the exchange value of the striptease. Cash, Liepe-Levinson points out, regulates the rituals of stripping, both male and female. Whereas the first film shows men coming backstage with g-strings stuffed with dollar bills, here cash is a fantastical visual trope, raining down on the men, the greenbacks under blue-light suggesting geysers of ejaculate. No one ever picks up the money. See Katherine Liepe-Levinson, *Strip Show*, 171. [↗](#)
23. Isaac Butler, "On Magic Mike XXL: Entertainment, Art, Fulfillment, and Big Dicks," *Parabasis*, October 12, 2015, <http://parabasis.typepad.com/blog/2015/10/on-magic-mike-xxl-entertainment-art-fulfillment-and-big-dicks.html>. [↗](#)
24. *Ibid.* [↗](#)
25. Joel and Ethan Coen play up this comparison in their Golden Age of Hollywood pastiche, *Hail Caesar!* [↗](#)
26. Silvia Federici, *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body, and Primitive Accumulation*, rev. ed. (New York: Autonomedia, 2014), 12. [↗](#)
27. *Ibid.*, 12 and 142. [↗](#)
28. *Ibid.*, 142. [↗](#)
29. *Ibid.*, 172. [↗](#)
30. *Ibid.* [↗](#)
31. Quoted in *Ibid.*, 180. [↗](#)
32. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1848), Marxists.org, accessed August 11, 2016, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/ch01.htm>. [↗](#)
33. Karl Marx, *Capital* (1867; repr. London: Penguin Books, 1990), 165. [↗](#)
34. *Ibid.* Emphasis added. I am grateful to Dr. Matthew P. M. Kerr for this example. [↗](#)
35. Gay, "I Wanted to Hug." [↗](#)
36. Nicholas Ridout, *Stage Fright, Animals, and Other Theatrical Problems* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 4. [↗](#)
37. As Helen Kolawole writes, "the case of Elvis is particularly infuriating because for many black people he represents the most successful white appropriation of a black genre to date {...} The enduring image of Elvis is a constant reflection of society's then refusal to accept anything other than the non-threatening and subservient

negro: Sammy Davies Jnr and Nat King Cole. The Elvis myth to this day clouds the true picture of rock'n'roll and leaves its many originators without due recognition." Helen Kolawole, "He Wasn't My King," *The Guardian*, August 15, 2002, <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2002/aug/15/elvis25yearson.elvispresley>. ↗

38. Candice M. Jenkins, *Private Lives, Proper Relations: Regulating Black Intimacy* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 14. ↗
39. *Ibid.*, 19–20. ↗
40. Maurice O. Wallace, *Constructing the Black Masculine: Identity and Ideality in African American Men's Literature and Culture, 1775–1995* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 30–31. ↗
41. *Ibid.*, 6. ↗
42. Mark Anthony Neal, *Looking for Leroy: Illegible Black Masculinities* (New York: NYU Press, 2013), 4. ↗
43. Antonia Randolph, "'Don't Hate Me Because I'm Beautiful': Black Masculinity and Alternative Embodiment in Rap Music," *Race, Gender, and Class* 13, nos. 3–4 (2006): 202. ↗
44. *Ibid.* ↗
45. Saidiya V. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 37. ↗
46. *Ibid.*, 22. ↗
47. *Ibid.*, 32–36. ↗
48. *Ibid.*, 22–23. ↗
49. Ariel Osterweis's work on dancer Desmond Richardson points out the distinct double-bind that black dancers face with regard to technical virtuosity: "the curious relationship between disciplined perceptions of virtuosity's excess and the disciplining of the racialized body is such that audiences are often taught to be weary of abundant movement while simultaneously expecting it of black dancers." In calling Richardson's virtuosity "choreographic falsetto," she points to the fact that such naturalization of labour can be applied to singers too. Ariel Osterweis, "The Muse of Virtuosity: Desmond Richardson, Race, and Choreographic Falsetto," *Dance Research Journal* 45, no. 3 (2013), 53–74. ↗
50. Keith M. Harris, "'Untitled': D'Angelo and the Visualization of the Black Male Body," *Wide Angle* 21, no. 4 (1999), 62–83. ↗
51. Doreen St. Felix, "Black Teens Are Breaking the Internet and Seeing None of the Profits," *Fader*, Dec/Jan 2017, <http://www.thefader.com/2015/12/03/on-fleek-peaches-monroe-meechie-viral-vines>. ↗
52. Mark Anthony Neal, "White Chocolate Soul: Teena Marie and Lewis Taylor," *Popular Music* 24, no. 3 (2005): 370. ↗
53. See Cerise L. Glenn and Landra J. Cunningham, "The Power of Black Magic: The Magical Negro and White Salvation in Film," *Journal of Black Studies* 40, no. 2 (2009), 135–152. ↗
54. David Savran, *Taking It Like A Man: White Masculinity, Masochism, and Contemporary American Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998). ↗
55. Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*, Marxists.org, accessed December 9, 2015, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/manuscripts/needs.htm>. ↗
56. Carly Mallenbaum, "'Magic Mike Live': Channing Tatum's Strip Show's Heading to Vegas in 2017," *USA Today* (Online), May 5, 2016, <http://www.usatoday.com/story/life/entertainthis/2016/05/04/channing-tatum-magic-mike-live/83948368/>. ↗
57. *Ibid.* ↗

58. Magic Mike Live Las Vegas, "Channing Tatum Brings Magic Mike To The Stage In Sin City," PR Newswire, May 4, 2016, <http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/channing-tatum-brings-magic-mike-to-the-stage-in-sin-city-300263285.html>. Emphasis added. ↗
59. See Liepe-Levinson, *Strip Show*. ↗

 [Bio](#)



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